



# Health Watch USA<sup>sm</sup>

Member of the National Quality Forum and a designated  
"Community Leader" for Value-Driven Healthcare  
by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

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RE: Healthcare Acquired Infections and HB 460

March 7, 2014

Dear Representative,

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak before your committee. I feel that providing the consumer and patient with information regarding deadly healthcare infection rates is very important. One of the most important questions asked was, "Can I know what the infection rates are if I have to go to the hospital to have hip surgery?" I would answer this "NO". As I testified, only two types of bacteria (C. Diff and MRSA bloodstream infections) and two surgical sites (colon removal and removal of the uterus via an abdominal incision) are reportable (see enclosure). The bacteria are reported as a lab event and not actual infections.

Go to: <http://www.medicare.gov/hospitalcompare/search.html> and see for yourself what is currently reported. You can check the enclosed file to verify the few measures that are utilized for a few facilities and what new is planned to be reported. These requirements have been fairly stable since 2010 and I know of no definitive and adopted plans for any other types of bacteria to be added (see enclosure).

Reporting requirements differ for different types of facilities. There are no Federal Reporting Requirements for Critical Access Hospitals and Ambulatory Surgery Centers (see enclosure) are only required to report staff flu vaccinations. Skilled nursing homes can use the NHSN but are not required to report through the NHSN. They are only required to report urinary tract infections (See enclosed report to Congress SNF-VBP-RTC.pdf).

Federal Penalties on the Healthcare system are quite small and I do not feel they affect the issue at hand, that of transparency. Remember, hospitals comprise less than 20% of the total State Healthcare facilities. These penalties are very complex and only partially related to infections. The description as given by some of the witnesses, I feel was an embellishment. Some penalties, such as those for central line infections are very small (only 20 events were penalized in 2012 and 26 in 2011, NATIONWIDE, for less than \$100,000 in yearly total penalties.) I will send out information regarding this and the value based-purchasing program next week. This is a very complex topic.

All of these requirements are in flux and national lobbying efforts are intense. Thus, I feel even these measures are at risk of modification or repeal.

I encourage you to support HB 460. All of us want to know what the infection rates are in our facilities, especially those of deadly and virtually untreatable bacteria, such as CRE. Currently, there is woefully inadequate information available to the consumer.

Thank you for this information,



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**Enclosures:**

- 1) Healthcare Facility HAI reporting Requirements to CMS via the NHSA. Downloaded 3/7/2014 from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/PDFs/CMS/CMS-Reporting-Requirements.pdf>
- 2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Report to Congress. Plan to Implement a Medicare Skilled Nursing Facility Value-Based Purchasing Program. March 2011 Downloaded 3.7.2014 from: <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/SNFPPS/Downloads/SNF-VBP-RTC.pdf>

**In Summary – Here is how I would Answer these Questions or Comments.**

- Can I find information regarding hip replacement infection rates on Hospital Compare? NO
- Do all facilities report infection rates to NHSN or CMS? NO (Critical Access Hospitals and Surgery Centers do not. Nursing Homes only urinary tract infections on Nursing Home Compare.)
- Are facility infection rates available to the consumer? YES but only a very few.
- Are we winning the war against healthcare associated infections? NO